

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A packet header for use in information packets transmitted within a computer
2 network comprising a protocol extension field that indicates changes of field values and/or
3 lengths within the header.
- 1 2. The packet header of claim 1 wherein the protocol extension field comprises two
2 bits.
- 1 3. The packet header of claim 2 wherein a value of 00 in the protocol extension field
2 indicates that the packet header is unaltered.
- 1 4. The packet header of claim 2 wherein a value of 01 or 10 in the protocol extension
2 field indicates a predetermined change in the content and/or length of the header.
- 1 5. The packet header of claim 2 wherein a value of 11 in the protocol extension field
2 indicates dynamic negotiation of the field values and/or size.
- 1 6. A communication protocol for a computer network comprising packets having
2 headers configured to include an indication of whether or not field values and/or lengths
3 thereof have been altered from a preestablished norm.
- 1 7. The communication protocol of claim 6 wherein the headers include protocol
2 extension fields, the values of which may be used to indicate whether or not the field values
3 and/or lengths have been altered.

